

# PECATONICA RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

20 S Court Street • PO Box 262 • Platteville, Wisconsin 53818  
 MEMBER COUNTIES: GREEN • IOWA • LAFAYETTE • ROCK

## PRTC/WRRTC FORMAL FUNDING AGREEMENT WORKING COMMITTEE

Green Co. Courthouse 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Courtroom, 1016 16<sup>th</sup> Ave • Monroe, WI

**1. Call to Order – Harvey W. Kubly, Chair, 2:27 PM**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Harvey W. Kubly at 2:27 PM

**2. Establishment of Committee Members Present – Mary Penn, PRTC Administrator**

<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Present</b>
Harvey W. Kubly	Green	x
Ron Wolter	Green	x
Philip Mrozinski	Iowa	x
Charles Anderson	Iowa	x
Alan Sweeney	Rock	x
Wayne Gustina	Rock	x

Also attending: Ken Lucht, WSOR, Mary Penn, SWWRPC

**3. Certification of Meeting’s Public Notice – Noticed by Penn**

- Motion to approve notice of public meeting – Gustina/Sweeney, Passed Unanimously

**4. Approval of Agenda – Prepared by Penn**

- Motion to approve minutes – Mrozinski/Anderson, Passed Unanimously

Prior to the motion being approved, Harvey Kubly noted that item #7 should have been on the PRTC regular meeting schedule and would not be addressed at this meeting.

**5. Approval of draft May 2013 Meeting Minutes – Prepared by Penn**

- Approval of draft May2013 Meeting minutes. Sweeney/Gustina, Passed Unanimously

**COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

Charles Anderson asked about where the Cheese Country trail actually began and who owned it. Kubly said PRTC owns the trail and it begins wherever the (train) track terminates. Ken Lucht said the trail started just south of Badger State Ethanol at the trail head where there is parking at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue west and runs west.

Kubly said that some of the PRTC money to establish the trail came from the salvage of the line which was taken out sometime in the late 1980’s. Anderson talked about the possible outcomes if Lafayette County paid a county contribution to the WRRTC and the financial impacts that might have, particularly since a large amount of the trail is in Lafayette County.

Kubly said he had spoken at the last meeting Green County Board Meeting about the possibility of joining the WRRTC. He said several people spoke about that issue including WDOT, saying that Green County joining WRRTC would have nothing to do with the PRTC or Green County’s relationship with it. The PRTC was created by 4 counties and would stand as such until it is changed. As far as spending money on the trail, Kubly did not think it was “kosher” and that he believed Eileen (Brownlee) would have an opinion on that. Alan Sweeney said the initial money (forming the PRTC) came from the counties. Kubly said in the beginning Iowa County would have done what all the other counties did and acknowledged that he needed to go back farther in the record.

**6. Continued Discussion re: Rock County Corporation Counsel – Alan Sweeney**

Sweeney said he had met with the Rock County Corp Counsel and said that Rock County's Counsel needed some model and if given one, he would use that to help draft an MOU. Corp Counsel said that it would be best if the PRTC's Corp Counsel (Eileen Brownlee) would work on that. Kubly said he had heard from Green County's Corp Counsel and he was waiting to hear from the Rock County Corp Counsel. Sweeney said this was all dependent on policy changes. Kubly said perhaps they should have Eileen come to meeting. Sweeney said the WSOR 5 year plan was helpful in decision making and of the \$175K allocated for bridge projects, \$158K is earmarked for projects to date. He asked if the \$26,500 was included and Lucht said it was. Throughout the 5 year plan, the contribution is the \$26,500 put in the PRTC budget which brought up the question if Green County felt the most comfortable leaving its contribution to the PRTC. Perhaps this might lead to a little less stringent MOU because the next 5 years was covered and perhaps Green Co would join the WRRTC as a member contributing ideas since originally the MOU idea was to allocate dollars to projects as priorities: funds would come from WRRTC or the PRTC. Seemingly, the 5 year plan covered the Monroe sub so it would lead to the question of "where do we go from here". Kubly said that in conversations with Green County personnel, Green was pretty firm in wanting Green County dollars going to the PRTC. If Green County were to join the WRRTC would the County be able to join with the understanding that Green County dollars would go to the PRTC. Sweeney said that was a question for Charles Anderson. Sweeney said they might be asked to contribute to insurance. Anderson said that he looked at having a big pool of money in "case a bridge falls in" and spoke of the danger of a derailment or a train going into the river and he commented that if there were a major problem, the \$26,500 wouldn't fund anything and the 5 year plan would be out the window. Anderson said he would hate to not see rail "down here" but then there would be no money for crossings because the amount of money available would be so small. Sweeney said that would be the advantage to the MOU. If Green County was adamant on retaining that amount that would have to be laid out in the MOU. Those dollars allocated for the PRTC would have to have agreement from the WRRTC. Sweeney said he did not know what was in it besides the size of the commission. Anderson pointed out all the money that is going into State acquisitions.

Kubly said that the issue of Green County joining the WRRTC had surfaced before and asked Sweeney if there was general consensus on if WRRTC would want Green County. Sweeney said it would add to the regional voice and why he had brought up the issue of the Fox Lake sub getting funding (during the PRTC regular meeting. He said the Monroe sub depended on the rest of the infrastructure more so than that rest of the infrastructure depended on the Monroe sub. He also said the Lafayette County issue was looming and did not know if that issue needed to be addressed first and if so would that free up \$5000 a year for Green County to go to WRRTC. He added that \$15 M of economic activity is a lot of cash. Anderson asked for clarification on the \$5000 and Sweeney said Lafayette County had an economic impact of \$15M in their trail survey and that was big. He said this committee and the whole PRTC committee really should put it to the Lafayette County board for the County to start contributing to the PRTC system. If the rail left, the trail would be gone. If Green County contributed \$5000 to the WRRTC then that would contribute to a "big system". Kubly reiterated that Green County officials wanted Green County dollars going to PRTC but the County would not necessarily be opposed to Green County joining the WRRTC. Ultimately, he said, there needed to be an agreement that would say if Green County dollars went to the PRTC, then Rock and Iowa dollars would go to the WRRTC. At the present time Kubly said there is only a "gentlemen's agreement" and acknowledged that it had been working for years, but in reality for the money discussed, something should be in writing someplace.

Anderson said the PRTC did not have any money when formed and asked when WSOR took over. Lucht said WSOR took over the track in the mid-80's. Anderson said that the economic impact in the area with even just one plant in town was significant and with the track there, there were unlimited possibilities, especially with a workforce. Sweeney said that any MOU would have to spell out that Green County dollars would go to the PRTC and that the Rock and Iowa dollars to WRRTC but there would have to be some language in an MOU to address the possibility of responses to a catastrophic event and any future issues that may come up with any of the rail infrastructure. Anderson said this would have to be agreed to by the railroad as well and did not think any other counties would object. Sweeney said he thought the "ball was rolling" in Jefferson County as well. Lucht said he had been told Jefferson County would be offering a resolution to join the WRRTC in August. Anderson asked if Lucht thought if this would be an opportunity to address catastrophic events and Sweeney said the idea would be an ability to negotiate an agreement to discuss potential problems. Kubly said we ought to have something in writing before some disaster happens. He said Green County wanted to pay to the PRTC and there should be no problem if WRRTC fixed a disaster if something happened. Sweeney added that the PRTC committee needed to petition the Lafayette Co board for contribution and would like to see Green County at least discussing the issue of Green County joining the WRRTC. Kubly said that for many years the Green Co contribution went to the WRRTC. Anderson said Iowa County might be approached by Lafayette County indicating that the 6 miles of trail in Iowa County should get County funds to help pay for trail maintenance. Sweeney said that Iowa County contributed to rail infrastructure as a whole. Philip Mrozinski said the \$15 M is generated by the trail but Lafayette County was not contributing that money back to rail infrastructure. Anderson said that if only Lafayette County had trail then they would petition Iowa County for dollars for trail maintenance for trail

## PRTC WORKING COMMITTEE JULY MINUTES

in Iowa County. Mrozinski said that counties were paying in but the point was that Lafayette County was not giving back to either the PRTC or the WRRTC. Kubly clarified that the Commission was spending money on the trail. He said most funding given to the trail was mainly for fencing which protected the corridor. He did not believe that the PRTC was permitted to spend money on the trail. Sweeney said the \$26,500 from Green County was for rail infrastructure and fencing could be viewed as a protection of the corridor. Kubly said in the past there had been some funds for surveying but as far as the Commission spending money on trail maintenance, the PRTC did not contribute. There had been money paid to protect the ROW. Kubly said their primary mission was to protect the corridor for future rail and if the corridor was not protected, there would be people wanting their land back. Anderson said maybe breaking down the contribution was not necessary. He said it was for regional rail infrastructure but an agreement to be involved in catastrophic events might be a prudent step to take. Anderson asked if there needed to be an agreement in place to get them to contribute to the rail. Wolter said they have representation. Sweeney said the Committee had not even begun to explore the economic impact of rail on Lafayette County. Kubly said it provided a way for Lafayette County agricultural producers to move their product.

Kubly spoke of the impact to the highway system. He said in Green County he knew farmers and grain elevators that used to truck grain to Dubuque and now it came to the Monroe ethanol plant, which saved wear and tear on Hwy 11. Wolter said there was a steady stream of trucks in Brodhead. Anderson asked in approaching Lafayette County should they seek the whole \$26,500. Wolter said it took Lafayette County years to get the trail infrastructure going. Wayne Gustina said they should examine the economic impact the County is receiving. Anderson it would be good to get the survey presented to the Lafayette County board. Kubly said that he was sure Leon Wolfe would be taking the study to the county board.

Sweeney said the potential agreement thus far should reflect that the Green County payment must go to the PRTC system and not be split; it should address the 5-year working plan, and have some sort of language that addresses the total rail infrastructure and something about money in cases of catastrophic events.

Kubly asked Lucht if he had any idea from WSOR's perspective what the railroads economic impact was to Green and Rock counties. Lucht said that WSOR could present something to them and talk to customers about jobs, taxes, growth and what is available. Kubly said if WSOR contributed \$30M to Green and Rock counties that could be useful in determining a level of contribution from Lafayette County. Wolter said that they would not have the \$15M if not for the rail corridor. It was pointed out that that was trail wide but Lafayette County got the "lions' share" of the money. Sweeney said they could do the address the issue of the PRTC joining the WRRTC at a future WRRTC meeting, noting that the chair of WRRTC had received the minutes of the last Committee meeting, which would help in discussions going forward.

Sweeney encouraged Kubly to talk to Eileen Brownlee to give her the gist of what the committee had been discussing. Mrozinski said that he thought she should come to the next meeting too. Sweeney also asked if it were time to have discussions at the regular PRTC meeting but Kubly said he thought that should not happen until there was something concrete coming out of the working committee and knowing the railroad economic impacts county by county. Sweeney thought that the agricultural economic impact could be determined in Lafayette County – he thought that all the information was out there such as prices per bushel. He said the basis was the regional impact and gave an example of grain prices impacting the region.

### **7. Discussion – TriCounty Trail Report Economic Impacts – Leon Wolfe**

No discussion.

### **8. Action Item - Adjournment**

- *Motion to adjourn meeting at 3:24 PM - Anderson/Gustina, Passed Unanimously*